

to sue and be sued for pain and suffering damages.

American taxpayers stand to save a total of \$45 billion nationwide. This savings would go directly in the pocket of every insured person at no cost to the taxpayers. The Joint Economic Committee has projected that the auto choice option will save Oklahomans \$420 million in automobile insurance premiums and will put \$186 back into the accounts of every person with a car. This is the equivalent of an instant tax cut for every insured person.

The New York Times stated that with this bill: "Everyone would win—except the lawyers" that live off of the current liability system. In fact, trial lawyers take in an estimated \$17 billion a year from auto accident cases. USA Today reported that 35 cents of every auto premium dollar goes to lawyers.

This bill has been labeled a "model of federalism." Each State has the right to opt out of auto choice if the State insurance commissioner finds that residents fail to receive at least a 30 percent reduction in bodily injury premiums. The State legislature retains the right to simply pass a law against this option and keep its current auto liability system.

There is mounting evidence that the current auto liability insurance system has become prey to rampant fraud and abuse, which is constantly fed by inflated pain and suffering claims. FBI Director Louis Freeh estimated that the average household pays an additional \$200 in unnecessary premiums just to cover these fraudulent schemes. This hits low income families particularly hard since about one-third of a family's disposable income is consumed by car insurance costs. Auto choice will put that money back into the pockets of taxpayers to help pay for needed expenses, providing long-overdue relief to all who choose this option.

I am happy to cosponsor this bill and hope that every American with car insurance will be given the opportunity to make this choice to provide long over due relief to all who choose this option. It is time for all drivers to begin to enjoy lower auto premiums and to allow government to spend its resources outside of the courtroom.

#### JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER PARKING IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1997

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 85, S. 797.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 797) to amend the John F. Kennedy Center Act to authorize the design and construction of additions to the parking garage and certain site improvements, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I am delighted that the Senate is considering S. 797, the John F. Kennedy Center Parking Improvement Act. This legislation, which will help to address parking and security problems at the Kennedy Center, was approved unanimously by the Committee On Environment and Public Works on June 5 of this year. I want to recognize the bill's cosponsors, Senators LOTT, BAUCUS, STEVENS, and KENNEDY, for their valuable assistance.

Briefly, Mr. President, this legislation provides authority to the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees to construct an addition to the existing parking garage at each of the north and south ends of the Center. Importantly, the Congressional Budget Office, in their letter of June 11, 1997, wrote that there will be not Federal costs associated with the enactment of S. 797.

The garage project will be financed through the issuance of industrial revenue bonds which will be repaid entirely with revenue derived from operation of the expanded garage. The bill includes a provision explicitly prohibiting the use of appropriated funds for the purpose of constructing or financing the parking garage expansion.

Also included in the bill is authorization for the Center to take action on site modifications for the improvement of security on the site. The Center has conducted a complete security review, and among the recommendations are changes to the main approach and plaza. This legislation allows the Center to pursue site modifications for the protection of the building and its visitors. The authorization of appropriations for this work, the site improvements and modifications, is provided by existing law.

Consistent with the John F. Kennedy Center Act Amendments of 1994, the Center's plans for the garage expansion and other, related site improvements will be developed in close consultation with the Department of the Interior.

Mr. President, the legislation reflects the commitment of the Kennedy Center Trustees to continually improve this Presidential monument for the benefit of the public—in a manner that is financially responsible. I want to again thank Senators LOTT, BAUCUS, STEVENS, and KENNEDY, for their help in drafting this bill. I urge the Senate to adopt this legislation.

#### AMENDMENT NOS. 1048 THROUGH 1053, EN BLOC

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, the following requests have been agreed to on both sides. There are six amendments at the desk that have been cleared on both sides. They are as follows:

Nos. 1048, 1049, 1050, 1051, 1052, and 1053.

I ask unanimous consent that these amendments be agreed to en bloc, the

bill be considered read a third time and passed, and that any statements relating to the amendments or bill appear at this point in the RECORD. I finally ask consent that the motion to reconsider the above action be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments (Nos. 1048, 1049, 1050, 1051, 1052, and 1053) agreed to en bloc are as follows:

#### AMENDMENT NO. 1048

Page 3, line 7, strike "or".

Page 3, line 12, strike the first period and all that follows and insert "; or".

Page 3, after line 12, insert the following:

"(C) any project to acquire large screen format equipment for an interpretive theater or to produce an interpretive film that the Board specifically designates will be financed using sources other than appropriated funds."

Page 4, strike lines 9 through 14.

Page 4, line 15, strike "5" and insert "4".

#### AMENDMENT NO. 1049

(Purpose: To provide for the design, construction, furnishing, and equipping of a Center for Performing Arts within the complex known as the New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center, and for other purposes)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

#### SEC. \_\_\_\_ CONSTRUCTION OF A CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The United States has an enriched legacy of Hispanic influence in politics, government, economic development, and cultural expression.

(2) The Hispanic culture in what is now the United States can be traced to 1528 when a Spanish expedition from Cuba to Florida was shipwrecked on the Texas coast.

(3) The Hispanic culture in New Mexico can be traced to 1539 when a Spanish Franciscan Friar, Marcos de Niza, and his guide, Estevanico, traveled into present day New Mexico in search of the fabled city of Cibola and made contact with the people of Zuni.

(4) The Hispanic influence in New Mexico is particularly dominant and a part of daily living for all the citizens of New Mexico, who are a diverse composite of racial, ethnic, and cultural peoples. Don Juan de Oarte and the first New Mexican families established the first capital in the United States, San Juan de los Caballeros, in July of 1598.

(5) Based on the 1990 census, there are approximately 650,000 Hispanics in New Mexico, the majority having roots reaching back ten or more generations.

(6) There are an additional 200,000 Hispanics living outside of New Mexico with roots in New Mexico.

(7) The New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center is a living tribute to the Hispanic experience and will provide all citizens of New Mexico, the Southwestern United States, the entire United States, and around the world, an opportunity to learn about, partake in, and enjoy the unique Hispanic culture, and the New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center will assure that this 400-year old culture is preserved.

(8) The New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center will teach, showcase, and share all facets of Hispanic culture, including literature, performing arts, visual arts, culinary arts, and language arts.

(9) The New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center will promote a better cross-cultural understanding of the Hispanic culture and the